Analysis of collection materials

Planners will want to survey their holdings to determine which of their collections will best meet the goals they have established. This initial survey may be made with the help of questions such as the following:

- Will we choose documents, photos, slides, negatives, objects, or oversized materials to digitize?
- Will the materials be a mixture of formats (such as manuscripts, maps, photographs, etc.)?
- How much material will need to be captured to a digital format?
- What is the condition of the material?
- Will items require special treatment or handling?
- Will the material be digitized from the original or from a surrogate (e.g., a photograph of the object or photocopy of the fragile manuscript)?
- Does the material have a physical relationship to something (e.g., to a mount, an album page, or a pedestal)?
- How much time will be involved in physical preparation of the material to be digitized?

Combining both the project goals and this analysis will provide an assessment of the selection process that is discussed in more detail in the chapter on **Selection**. It should also be noted that this analysis will affect decisions of hardware and software purchasing and other associated costs in preparing the materials for digitization.

Needs Analysis

Once these overview aspects of the digitization project have been established, and it is clear that a digital project will meet your needs and an audience has been determined, the next step in planning a digital project is to take stock of your environment and resources to assess needs. Typically, this kind of analysis achieves several goals. These include but are not limited to:

- determining funding sources,
- assessing staffing required, and
- examining the extent and type of technical support needed.

To conduct this analysis, it is helpful to ask specific questions such as:

Equipment:

- Do you have the hardware to digitize?
- Do you have the software to digitize?
- Do you have adequate storage for master digital images?
- Do you have the software and hardware to provide access to the digitized collections and documents?
- Will your equipment provide the speed of access needed for large files?
- Will you be able to upgrade equipment as newer technologies come online?